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ABSTRACT

The design of an effective reading course in English for academic purposes must be based on an understanding of the reading process (including perceptual skills and cognitive processing), an understanding of problems in mastering the English writing system (punctuation, decoding handwriting, and confusion between typefaces), and an awareness of the deficiencies the particular learner group must overcome. Assessment of learners' reading skills, by a variety of techniques, in the context of their language backgrounds can then lead to development of materials and methods for effective reading instruction. English as a second language (ESL) programs have adopted a number of approaches to these issues; both theories and procedures are in the process of being refined. Instructor familiarity with foreign languages, especially those with a different writing system, is also helpful in ESL reading instruction. Examples of a number of teaching and testing exercises are included. A six-page bibliography concludes the document. (MSE)

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BEGINNING READING in ENGLISH as a SECOND LANGUAGE

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by Mary Newton Bruder
and Robert T. Henderson

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Gina Doggett, Editor, Language in Education

Contents

1. THEORIES OF READING IN ESL 1

2. PROBLEMS IN READING ESL 11

3. ASSESSING COMPONENTS OF THE READING SKILLS 25

CONCLUSION 64

BIBLIOGRAPHY 65

ADDITIONAL READING 69

ABOUT THE AUTHORS 71

Chapter 1
Theories of Reading in ESL

THE PROBLEM

The development of an ability to read with speed and comprehension is clearly an essential objective of most students of English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL). For learners in non-English-speaking environments, printed material represents the primary medium of communication in the new language. Good reading skills are also important for students in English-speaking countries, particularly for those who are preparing to undertake academic work, where success depends to a great extent on the ability to absorb knowledge from books and other written sources. It is therefore imperative that ESL/EFL instructional programs prepare students to be able to read efficiently. The task is further intensified if the language of the learner does not use the same writing system as English, and if the learner has had little exposure to English.

The present focus is on adult foreign students who need to gain proficiency in reading English for academic purposes in order to achieve the full potential of their education at the secondary or university level. The problem of illiteracy, that is, the inability to read in any language, is not dealt with. The students of concern here are those who can read a language but who are nonreaders in English.

The problem of nonreaders is relatively new to academically oriented ESL programs; until the mid-1970s, international students who came to university

programs could, virtually without exception, read at least elementary texts in English. At that point the international student population began to change. ESL programs increasingly admitted students from countries where English was not part of the normal curriculum, or who had avoided English in much the same manner as U.S. students sometimes avoid foreign languages. For these and various other reasons, students who could not read any English and who often did not know the Roman alphabet were entering the U.S. programs. The tried-and-true philosophy of "give them the opportunity to read, see that they do it, and they'll learn" no longer worked. Teachers now had to learn how to teach the students to read English.

A further problem with some students has been that although they can read their native language, there is such a difference between written and spoken forms of the language that they tend not to associate reading and speaking. Arabic-speaking students, for example, generally speak one of their modern regional dialects, while a good portion of the written material is in Classical or Standard Arabic, which can be quite different from the spoken language used for all but the most formal occasions. While written English is also somewhat more formal than the spoken form, there is not such a wide divergence as in Arabic. Thus, students have to be taught to make the connection between the two.

The design of an effective reading course must be based on an understanding of the reading process, which entails an examination of the various components of fluent reading, including perceptual strategies and cognitive subprocesses, which have recently been the object of considerable attention by psychologists, language specialists, and educators. A clear picture of what is involved in efficient reading will enable teachers to provide learners with the kinds of skills they need. Teachers must also gain an awareness of the specific problems that learners can be expected to encounter in their attempts to master the English writing system, taking into consideration relevant features of alphabetic representation, sound-symbol

correspondences, writing style, and rhetorical organization. Finally, it is essential to make an accurate assessment of the deficiencies that particular learners or groups of learners will need to overcome.

The first step in designing an effective reading program, of course, is to determine what the learners already know. While there are fluent speakers who can get by for some time in class without the teacher realizing that they cannot read, conversely there are nonfluent speakers who can read better than they are able to reveal through normal testing procedures. It is important, therefore, to evaluate reading ability as a separate component of overall language proficiency and to use this assessment when deciding on course content and methodology.

Since the specific deficiencies of particular learners will depend to a large extent on their native language (L1) background, their L1 reading ability, their cultural orientation, and their general level of proficiency in English, a means must be available for assessing such factors for individual students in order to determine the most appropriate instructional techniques. The reading skill must be analyzed from the viewpoint of each learner's language background to discover what each learner actually knows. Methods and materials can then be devised to teach reading to a heterogeneous population with no common tongue in a relatively short time, usually less than a year, so that the students will be able to compete in academic settings with American students.

This text discusses what various ESL programs have done to approach this problem.

READING THEORIES AS APPLIED TO BEGINNING ESL READERS

Reading can be viewed as a complex skill involving a series of subskills, all of which have

to work together in order for a reader to be able to extract meaning from a written text and reconstruct the author's intended message. For simplicity, reading ability can be subdivided into perceptual and cognitive skills, but these are certainly not independent skill areas: there is constant interaction between the functioning of the eyes and the brain in normal reading, and neither would be of much use without the other.

Perceptual Skills

Since the first step in reading is to perceive what is on the page (or, increasingly, the computer video screen), and since the functioning of the eyes is much more readily observable than the functioning of the brain, the perceptual aspects of reading have received a great deal of attention from researchers. An analysis of the mechanics by which information is picked up has shown that the eyes, rather than flowing smoothly across lines of text, move from one point to another in short jumps, called saccades, stopping at each point for a short pause, referred to as a fixation (see Goodman, 1970; Mitchell, 1982; Smith, 1979). Each fixation lasts about a quarter of a second in normal fluent reading, and permits the intake of graphic information from a small area called the fovea, which extends approximately one degree of visual angle in each direction from the point of fixation. The material within the fovea is what can be seen clearly, but a reader can also pick up useful information from other parts of the page even though individual letters are not clearly identifiable. The fuzzy information outside the foveal area is important for efficient reading, since it is used to guide the eyes to the next fixation point (Bouma, 1978; Rayner, 1978). That is, a reader can see if there are any long words coming up, can tell how far it is to the end of the line, and so forth, and based on such details the eyes are directed to the point where the most useful graphic information is likely to be found.

The visual information that the eyes pick up during a fixation, consisting of graphic representations in terms of the lines and angles that constitute the letters, is coded in raw form in what is known as iconic memory or preperceptual storage, where the uninterpreted information is stored very briefly--for about half a second, according to Foss and Hakes (1978)--before it decays. At this stage the reader's brain has not yet translated the graphic shapes into meaningful units such as letters or words. To be useful in the reading process, this iconic material must be analyzed in some way, either through direct identification of words or morphemes --minimal units of meaning--or initially through identification of the individual letters or letter combinations that are contained in the words. Storage of information in iconic memory, then, is a first step in the perception of graphic material, but the contents of the icon have no linguistic value until they are further processed. This processing is carried out in what is often referred to as working or short-term memory. Theories about how the brain might carry out this processing are briefly discussed in the following section.

Cognitive Processing

Once the graphic material has been perceived, the brain has to decode the contents of iconic memory in order to transform it into comprehension of the text. For purposes of description, it might be helpful to view reading as a complex information-processing system (Kolers, 1970). The operation of such a system requires an efficient mechanism by which the reader can retrieve from long-term memory the information necessary for interpreting the graphic input. Long-term memory, where all of the knowledge that the reader has acquired is stored, can be viewed as consisting of various levels of information, from basic details about letter shapes and identities to lexical information, such as the spelling, pronunciation, meaning, and syntactic

characteristics of words, to high-level general knowledge about the world.

The comprehension process for any new information can be said to consist of comparing the new data being introduced into short-term memory with preexisting knowledge in the reader's long-term memory. A text is much easier to understand if it is based on concepts that the reader is already familiar with. A person who has studied a great deal of psychology, for example, will more readily grasp new theories of learning than one who has had little previous exposure to psychological concepts. The cognitive processes that are used to match new input with knowledge held in long-term memory run in both directions, often referred to as bottom-up and top-down processes. Bottom-up or data-driven processes depend primarily on the information presented by the text. Top-down, or conceptually driven, processes involve the reader's previous knowledge about the language and about the subject matter.

Perhaps the most basic kind of bottom-up processing is the visual discrimination of letters. This task is probably based on significant distinctive features such as the lines and angles that make up the letters and their configuration within the letters (see Smith, 1979). Once the letters that make up a word have been recognized, the word itself can be accessed or recalled from long-term memory, either by means of a visual match with representations in the "internal lexicon"--one's knowledge of words and their meanings--or by first assigning a phonological identity to the word in order to process it in terms of its sound, as if it were being heard rather than read. This process can involve subvocalization--that is, converting the written material into actual speech sounds, which usually involves moving one's lips--or, more efficiently, transforming the letter shapes or graphemes directly into an abstract phonological code without activation of the speech mechanism. A main problem with such theories of phonological mediation in English concerns the abundance of orthographic irregularities, which would require a highly complex system of grapheme-to-phoneme correspondence rules. In

English, unlike many other alphabetic languages, it is often very difficult to determine how a word is pronounced based on its spelling, as can be seen in the very distinct pronunciations of words such as through, though, thought, and tough, or to know how a word is spelled based on its pronunciation, as in caught, ache, and so on. This has led many psychologists (see, for example, Barron, 1981; Massaro, 1979; Underwood, 1979) to conclude that in reading, meaning is determined primarily through direct visual recognition of words rather than converting to sound, though subsequent transformation to a speech code may be a means of remembering material until it can be integrated into the meaning of a sentence, which is also a function of short-term memory.

Another way that lexical access--the identification of word meaning--may be achieved is through the perception of visual characteristics of the words themselves, without depending on the prior recognition of component letters. One such characteristic is the overall shape of the word, including its length and the outline pattern created by the ascending and descending letters, those that extend above (b, d, f, h, k, l, t) and below (g, j, p, q, y) the line of print, perhaps along with some internal analysis, such as the identification of some of the letters, especially those at the beginning or end of the word. For example, fluent readers probably do not process familiar words of high frequency such as the articles a and the in terms of their individual letters, but perceive them directly as lexical units.

Actually, it is possible that a combination of phonological and visual access is used by most readers, very common words being recognized visually, and less common words being recoded to speech sounds through a set of grapheme-to-phoneme correspondence rules. This possibility has been referred to as a dual-access hypothesis (Foss & Hakes, 1978). Even fluent readers can be observed to slow down when they come across an unusual word in order to sound it out.

In summary, bottom-up processing hypotheses view word recognition as the result of a flow from graphic input to meaning, either directly or through phonological mediation.

In contrast to bottom-up processes, top-down processes are believed to depend on the reader's own contribution to comprehension through the knowledge that he or she has about the world and about the syntactic and semantic constraints of the language. A reader who is familiar with the language, including its common rhetorical patterns, and with the topic about which he or she is reading, can usually anticipate words before they are encountered, making detailed bottom-up processing unnecessary. In a study some years ago, Wilson (1973) found that graduate students in advanced ESL classes had much less difficulty reading material in their fields than they did the ESL texts. Proponents of top-down models of reading such as Goodman (1970, 1973, 1976) and Smith (1973) contend that an efficient reader does not have to identify letters or even words with precision, but merely samples from graphic cues, supplying the contextually determined syntactic and semantic information needed to predict grammatical structure and subsequent graphic input. In the sentence, Please turn out the lights when you _____, it is fairly easy to supply the final word based on the meaning of the sentence. The reading process is said to consist basically of testing and confirming these predictions by comparing them with the least possible amount of visual input. In the example given above, the reader merely has to see that the final word begins with the letter "l" to confirm his prediction that the word in question is leave.

While Goodman (1976) recognizes that less proficient readers require more graphic input than advanced readers, he claims that even beginning readers are able to draw on the syntactic and semantic information available to them. Most of the research with top-down processing has been done with native speakers of English. It therefore presupposes a fluent command of the language in its spoken form before learning to read. In dealing with ESL

students, however, it is important to recognize the special problems of second-language learners who, unlike children learning to read in their native language, may not possess sufficient knowledge of the target language to aid significantly in their predictive capability. As Yorio (1971) has pointed out, reading in a foreign language is not the same as in one's native language due to deficiencies in the reader's knowledge of the structure and vocabulary of the language, his or her ability to select the most productive graphic cues, and his or her memory span, as well as interference from his or her native language.

Perhaps it is most realistic to view reading as an interactive process, as proposed by Rumelhart (1977). The interactive model emphasizes the cooperation that must exist between bottom-up and top-down processes. According to this model, long-term memory consists of several abstract levels of meaning, each storing different kinds of information, such as letter features, letters, and words. The perception of a set of letter features can trigger the recognition of the corresponding letter, which in turn activates words containing the letter. As more and more letters are recognized, the corresponding word is accessed, and as more and more words are recognized and contextual comprehension begins to take place, activation will begin to flow down to aid in the recognition of subsequent words.

In the interactive model, phonological encoding is seen as a useful mechanism both in lexical access and as a way of storing material in short-term memory until it can be integrated with subsequent material in order to extract the complete meaning of a sentence or piece of text.

For skilled readers, the lower-level processing tasks involved in reading, such as letter identification and word recognition, become so automatic that the limited resources of short-term memory can be devoted to the integration of meaning at the level of sentences or longer units of text. But as Perfetti and Hogaboam (1975) point out:

If a reader requires considerable processing capacity to decode a single word, his processing capacity is less available for higher order integrated processes--for example, memory for the just previously coded word may suffer, memory for the preceding phrase may decrease, and the subject's ability to predict what he is yet to encounter on the printed page may diminish. (p. 461)

Chapter 2
Problems in Reading ESL

The ease with which learners will be able to acquire effective reading skills in English can be expected to vary, especially at lower levels of instruction, depending on their previous reading experience. The extent to which they have developed reading strategies in their first language, as well as the differences between their native writing system and that of English, will affect the types of problems they will have to confront and the effort that will be required to overcome such problems. While all learners will have to adjust to the peculiarities of the language and its system of written representation, the nature of the adjustments that will have to be made will not be the same for a student whose native language uses an alphabetic system as for one whose language is represented by means of a syllabary or a logographic system. In the following sections are outlined some of the decoding difficulties that different groups of ESL learners face as the result of the contrast between their first (L1) and second language (L2) writing systems.

Some aspects of reading in English cause problems for all learners, even those whose writing systems are the same. Languages as closely related as British and American English differ in some spellings and in a number of categories of punctuation, so students who have learned British English at home have some new things to learn. The common difficulties include punctuation, decoding of handwritten English, and confusions of different typefaces, which can vary greatly from text to text.

When the writing system is different, there is the basic problem of figuring out which pieces of the "squiggles" are meaningful. For example, students of Arabic have been known to carefully copy marks that were left after the teacher erased the board. There is the problem of sound-symbol correspondence, deciphering which sound goes with which letter or sequence, a problem that is worsened when the sound itself does not exist in the learner's system. Then there is a very real physical problem of headaches and tired eyes when one must read in a different direction.

Students from languages that use the Roman alphabet are often handicapped by their expectation that reading English will be easy. They are tricked by false cognates or by grammatical structures that operate in different ways from their native languages.

DECODING PROBLEMS

Problems Common to All Learners

The first set of common problems involves punctuation. When confronted with a page of written English, beginning readers may know that the spaces on the page separate words; they may not know why the beginning letter of each sentence is larger than the others (or even notice it), or why the pronoun I is always larger. They probably will not know the significance of paragraphing, and if they do not know the Roman alphabet, they will not notice italics as different from ordinary type. They almost certainly will not know much about the ways in which punctuation can influence the meaning of written English.

Consider the following pair (Nash, 1983):

> Cheryl explained, "John said I passed the test, but he was wrong."

> Cheryl explained, "John said, 'I passed the test,' but he was wrong." (p. 17)

The skilled reader of English knows that in the first sentence Cheryl failed the test and in the second sentence it was John who had not done so well, but a beginning reader of ESL could be expected to miss the distinction.

Punctuation has not received a great deal of attention in the literature of foreign or second language learning, perhaps because in the traditional view, punctuation is a marker for intonation, and in oral-aural approaches to language learning, one hears language before one sees it, removing the necessity to teach punctuation explicitly. The other possibility is that punctuation is seen as the companion of the writing course, when the students actually produce English prose. One is not likely to hear such an utterance as the one above, however, so we cannot expect intonation to sort out the meaning for the learner. And academically oriented adults are probably not going to be assigned such dialogues for writing practice. The only place students would be expected to encounter usage of single and double quotations is in a reading text, and reading texts do not teach punctuation for comprehension.

In a study designed to discover the effect of punctuation on reading comprehension, Nash (1983) found that punctuation does indeed affect comprehension, quite profoundly at beginning levels of proficiency across language groups. Her comparison of Arabic speakers with Spanish speakers showed the Arabic speakers to have more difficulty at all levels of proficiency. Even though it stands to reason that students whose writing system is very different from that of the L2 will have more difficulty in reading, insufficient attention has been paid to this seemingly low-level skill.

Based on a study of seven modern languages (English, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Thai, and Greek), Nash identifies seven functions punctuation may serve (punctuation from English is given for illustration): (a) to show emphasis

(underlining or italics); (b) to terminate (periods, question marks, exclamation points); (c) to show omission (apostrophes, ellipsis marks); (d) to separate (commas, colons, semicolons); (e) to amplify (brackets and parentheses); (f) to show juncture (hyphens and dashes), and (g) to name (underlining or italics, commas for appositives).

To determine precisely what difficulty the students are likely to have, Nash suggests comparing the two language systems (L1 and English) in three ways. The first is whether the two languages mark the same functions. For the languages she compared, she found that generally all languages mark all seven functions. The second problem is to identify how the languages mark the functions. The language may use punctuation alone to mark a function: for example, in the yes-no question in informal English, You're going? only the ? reveals that this is not a statement. The language may use only a morphological marker: Japanese ka needs no written mark to accompany it to make a question. Or the language may use some combination of punctuation and morphology or syntax to mark a function, such as the French n'est-ce pas followed by a ? or the normal subject-verb inversion plus ? in English.

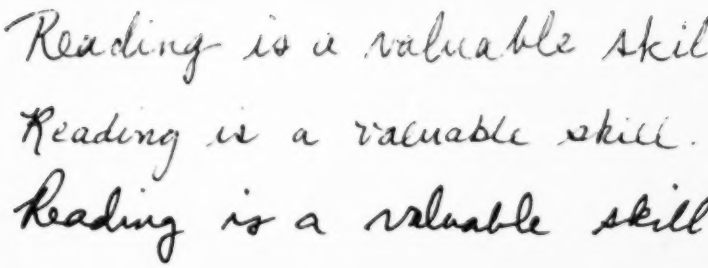
The third aspect to look at in comparing the systems of the languages are the similarities and differences within each functional category. Sometimes, the same function is marked by essentially the same symbol; all the languages in Nash's study marked declaratives with something that looks like a dot and exclamations with something like an exclamation point. when the systems compare so fully, the students are not likely to have any difficulty. On the other hand, as with Greek, which uses the semicolon to mark questions, a familiar mark may be used for quite a different function, which could be expected to cause reading problems for the students. Finally, if a function is not marked at all in one language, the greatest difficulties can be expected, since the students may have to be taught new language concepts at a time when their language proficiency is very low. For example, English uses the apostrophe to mark contractions, as in I'm, isn't.

The only other language in Nash's sample that uses contractions at all is Spanish, in which they are rare. Since basic reading texts that include dialogues are full of contracted forms, many students must have considerable difficulties with them.

English, it seems, is quite rich in the variety and uses of punctuation marks. The problem for the reading teacher at the beginning levels is to be sensitive to uses of punctuation that are likely to affect the meaning of the text and to make sure the students understand these first. Other uses of punctuation can be learned after the student gains sufficient skill with the language to comprehend their explanation in English.

The second set of common problems concerns handwriting. Although most of the material a typical ESL student will have occasion to read will be in printed form, he or she will also find it necessary at times to be able to read handwritten messages. Instructors usually use handwriting on the blackboard as well as for comments on tests and papers; students take class notes in longhand; and, indeed, most informal written communication is handwritten. Since letter shapes in handwriting are often quite different from standard printed forms (compare, for example, a - , f - , r - , s - , v - , z -), and since the distinctions between some handwritten letters are minimal (as with / , / , / , / , / , / , / , /), it is important that students whose languages do not use the Roman alphabet be given special training in order to gain familiarity with the handwritten forms of the letters.

The main problem in learning to read handwriting is that there is often considerable variation in form and style from one individual to another, both in the shape of particular letters and in the overall slant, size, and spacing of the writing. Compare, for example, the following samples, all of which could be considered good handwriting in spite of the differences among them:



Thus, in addition to teaching a standard form of handwriting, some of the major variables should also be taught.

Varying typefaces present a third set of problems. Modern German classes, for example commonly begin reading in a script similar to this one and then switch to a Gothic script that looks like a different language once the students advance to "literature." Many learners have had this traumatic experience. With ESL learners who are unfamiliar with the Roman alphabet, the same thing can happen when changing from text to text in different type styles. The serifs, or the embellishments at the tops and bottoms of letters in some typefaces, may be confusing, as students may think the serifs create new letters with different correspondences, in the same manner as adding dots in Arabic, for example. Following is an example of a serif typeface:

Reading is a valuable skill.

And, as mentioned earlier, italics can present problems when the students do not notice the difference, or do not know the significance of the difference.

The teacher should also examine the text materials to see if there are particular uses of boldface type, italics, or other features that signal certain types of directions or activities.

Problems Specific to Language Systems

While difficulties in acquiring familiarity with the alphabetic symbols and the conventions of printing and handwriting discussed so far can be expected to affect the reading ability of beginning ESL students regardless of their language background, different kinds of problems can be anticipated depending on the type of graphic representation students have previously learned to use. From the point of view of various writing systems commonly used in different languages, the adjustments that learners from diverse backgrounds will have to make in learning to read English are explored here.

English is one of many modern languages that use some form of alphabetic writing, in which the individual letters or letter combinations represent language sounds, or phonemes. As noted earlier, the correspondences between sounds and symbols are not as consistent in English as in some other languages with a more regular orthography. However, the basic principle is still that the way a word is written is based on the discrete phonemic units constituting the oral articulation of a word. In contrast to such alphabetic systems, the syllabaries and logographic systems used by many languages, primarily in the Far East, consist of symbols (characters) that represent syllables or complete words. The outstanding example of a logographic system is that of Chinese writing, which uses thousands of characters, each representing a different semantic concept. Japanese writing, on the other hand, makes use of both a logographic system borrowed from Chinese and two syllabaries (hiragana and katakana), in which each symbol represents a particular consonant-plus-vowel sequence.

Students from these language backgrounds may experience basic difficulty in learning the very concept of letter-sound correspondence: that each symbol represents not a word or syllable, but an individual phoneme. Lacking an understanding of this principle, they would fail to take advantage of the orthographic efficiency made possible by alpha-

betic writing. The task of learning to read could be seriously hampered if a student tended to treat written words as isolated visual displays to be memorized rather than using sound-symbol correspondences to relate the written and oral forms.

Many languages, including Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, Hindi, and Thai, are written with alphabetic systems, but using non-Roman alphabets. The characters of these alphabets are very different from those of English. Numerous conventions of English, such as capitalization, hyphenation, and spacing, are lacking or quite different in some of these languages. In addition, in Arabic, Persian, and Hebrew, the direction of writing is from right to left, the opposite of the Roman alphabet.

Examples:

Thai ครอบครัวเราเป็นครอบครัวที่ไม่ใหญ่นัก

Arabic · الاثنين سيعمل حساب العيله وما سيحبش يزعلها

Although students whose native languages use non-Roman alphabets are familiar with the concept of sound-symbol correspondence, they must learn to recognize a completely new set of symbols and to associate these symbols with their respective sounds with a high degree of automaticity before they can be expected to read English with facility. This can be especially difficult in the case of letters that share a large number of visual features and are thus very similar in appearance, particularly if the letters represent sounds that do not exist in the learner's native language.

In the historical development of European alphabetic writing systems, all of which derived from the original alphabet devised in Ancient Greece on the basis of a syllabary introduced by Phoenician seafarers, major differences came about principally between the types of systems used by languages in Eastern and Western Europe. Since they have common roots, though, there are numerous similarities in individual symbols among the quasi-Roman alphabets. The problems that learners encounter stem from the

fact that graphemes that are similar in appearance may represent quite different sounds in two languages, as observed in correspondences between Greek and English (H ~ E, ng ~ e, v ~ n, p ~ r, o ~ s, x ~ ch, w ~ o) or between Russian and English (B ~ v, H ~ n, p ~ r, y ~ u, x ~ kh). In early stages of learning to read English, such similarities could be troublesome for students who have already learned to associate symbols with sounds other than those they represent in English.

Ironically, students whose native languages use the Roman alphabet may experience the greatest difficulty in mastering English sound-symbol correspondences since they have already learned to associate given letters with sounds in their own languages, which may or may not be the same as the sounds they represent in English. A Spanish speaker, for example, would tend to pronounce unfamiliar words according to Spanish sound-symbol correspondence rules, potentially making comprehension more difficult. In Spanish, the letter r is pronounced like the tap sound of intervocalic d in English. A student may hear the word "kidding" and want to look it up in a dictionary. He may become quite frustrated trying to find it with an r in the middle of the word. It should be noted, on the other hand, that in the case of cognate words, there is usually more similarity in the written forms of equivalent words than in their spoken forms, allowing ESL learners to exhibit greater reading comprehension than their overall language proficiency would permit.

In light of these factors, it is apparent that learners' native languages will have some bearing on the kind and degree of difficulty they experience in acquiring reading ability in English. It would therefore be useful to take language background into consideration in an initial assessment of basic decoding problems and in the design of a beginning reading programs.

Vocabulary Problems

For students whose language is completely unrelated to English, all the words will present more or less equal difficulty; therefore, some rational means of presentation will have to be devised to help the students learn new words as quickly as possible. At the very beginning levels, the readings should reinforce in the visual mode the language that the students are learning aurally, so they will be getting a double dose of the same words. Later on, when the students can comprehend more difficult language than they can produce, reading serves as a primary source of new vocabulary.

For students from Romance language backgrounds, the Latinate vocabulary will be much easier than words with an Anglo-Saxon source. Demonstrate, for example, is easier for them than show. They may have trouble with the pronunciation, especially with stress placement; but they will not have difficulty with the meaning. There are, of course, false cognates, but these are limited in number and can be given special attention when they arise.

A more important problem for all learners arises when the semantic field of the word does not match in the target and native languages. The words make and do in English are often represented by a single word in many languages, and students have difficulty knowing which to use. At the beginning stages of reading in a new language, it is not likely that the students would be reading texts in which this particular problem would affect comprehension. The students probably translate both into their native language equivalent with little loss of comprehension.

Many individual words or phrases can have a variety of meanings depending on the context, and students' individual knowledge of these contexts will affect their comprehension. Washington can refer to a president, a city, a state, a government, a monument, a bridge, and various public and private schools. It is not always easy for students to determine which meaning to choose for a given word.

Morphology and Syntax Problems

Compared with many languages, English morphology is relatively simple. Students should learn it quite early since it often provides a redundancy that will help comprehension. The inflectional suffixes (-d for past, -s for plural, possessive, or third person singular, for example) are few in number and are usually learned as part of the grammatical structure. The teacher of reading needs to point out how they can be useful in deciphering a text. Learning derivational affixes (pre-, -tion, -cy) allows students to relate words to each other and reduces the task of vocabulary learning.

The syntax of English is not particularly complicated, either, given the possibilities that exist in the world's languages. While the productive skills of speaking and writing can be difficult to master, students can use the receptive skills of listening and reading to comprehend material containing syntax that is beyond their ability to produce. The use of the past perfect tense, for example, may come quite late in the sequence of grammatical patterns to be mastered for production, but it is fairly straightforward in meaning and can be taught for recognition along with or shortly after the simple past. The same is true of passives, relative clauses, and conditional sentences.

Comprehension Problems

Even for students who have thoroughly mastered the basic features of the writing system, there may be serious problems in reading comprehension due not only to a limited knowledge of vocabulary or a lack of familiarity with the grammatical and rhetorical conventions of the language, but also to limited previous experience with the subject matter dealt with in a reading selection.

It has been found that much of the difficulty that foreign learners of English experience in reading is due to the inability to relate what they are reading to their own preexisting knowledge. As

Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) point out, comprehension involves not only the readers' language proficiency, but also their background knowledge. Prior knowledge of the world is seen as being organized into cognitive schemata. According to schema theory, in order for efficient comprehension to take place, ongoing interaction must occur between the reader's existing knowledge, which is often culturally based, and new information presented in the text. That is, much of the meaning conveyed by a text depends on background information that the author assumes the reader will share and that is therefore not made explicit. The proficient reader is expected to be able to make inferences and arrive at a fuller interpretation of the text than is actually written down. If readers are unable to make the necessary inferences due to a lack of familiarity with the sociocultural patterns implicit in a text, they may not fully understand what they are reading even though they know all the words and have an adequate mastery of the grammar.

Carrell and Eisterhold (1983), in their discussion of schema theory, distinguish between formal schemata, including background knowledge that a reader has about linguistic and rhetorical structures, and content schemata, which consist of prior knowledge about the specific content area dealt with in a given text. Both kinds of knowledge can be expected to influence a reader's understanding of a passage. For example, someone with medical training will be able to derive meaning from an article about surgical techniques more easily than a person who is unfamiliar with medical writing styles, technical vocabulary, and operating procedures.

For students who are not only learning a new language but also dealing with unfamiliar types of rhetorical organization and cultural patterns that may be quite different from those of their native lands, comprehension of a new piece of text can be severely restricted. Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) therefore insist that ESL teachers "must be particularly sensitive to reading problems that result from the implicit cultural knowledge presupposed by a text."

Cultural Orientation to Reading

In general, ESL teachers view the purpose of reading to be to derive knowledge or pleasure. Most of the training offered to students in academically oriented programs concentrates on reading to gather information. Such reading should be done silently and as rapidly as possible, and necessarily involves giving critical attention to the information and ideas presented by the author. While teachers try to teach this orientation, many students seem to have trouble accepting it. In some cultures, reading is seen as an art form rather than as a linguistic tool. Furthermore, many students' previous experience with reading has dealt mainly with religious material, which is read aloud and with reverence. These factors may explain why some students seem to resist teachers' exhortations to speed up by giving less attention to individual words and more to the development of ideas in a text. Critical reading is a new concept to many students because they have had no experience with questioning the authority of the printed page.

Chapter 3
Assessing Components of the Reading Skills

Accurate assessment of reading ability is essential whether its purpose is to evaluate an individual's potential for success in an academic program or to determine the type and level of instruction that he or she needs in order to achieve the greatest possible reading proficiency. This section will examine various kinds of tests that have been used to measure reading ability, discussing the appropriateness of each for various situations. As will be seen, while some tests may provide an accurate picture of a subject's overall reading ability, most of them do not give us a clear indication of the specific problems that may be affecting that ability. Given the complexity of the reading process, it is often not enough to know the percentage of correct responses that an individual was able to give on a reading comprehension test. To be of real value, an assessment should provide detailed information regarding the source of the learner's weaknesses by identifying deficiencies in one or more of the subcomponents of the reading process: letter identification, word recognition, lexical access, contextual interpretation, background knowledge, integration of meaning, retention of information, and so forth.

TEST TYPES

All standardized tests of ESL include a test of reading comprehension, but these tests do not

discriminate between nonreaders, people who read a little, and very elementary readers. The reading section is at the end of the test, as a rule, and if students get a minimal score on that part of the test, the evaluator cannot tell whether they could not read or they could not finish the test because of general proficiency problems.

The problem for the teacher is to learn exactly where the learner is in reading so that appropriate materials and methods may be selected. Depending on which part of the reading skill is being assessed, a number of tests may be administered fairly quickly. Most of the classroom tests have not been standardized, so it is difficult to use them for comparison purposes, but generally this is not the purpose of giving such tests.

Cloze Tests

A relatively simple way to assess reading proficiency is by means of a cloze test. This procedure involves presenting a reader with a passage from which every fifth to tenth word has been systematically deleted, except for the first and last sentences, which are usually left intact. The reader is asked to fill in the blanks with appropriate words to complete the meaning of the text. A proficient reader may be expected to know what part of speech (noun, verb, adjective, etc.) would be most appropriate in a given context, and on the basis of overall meaning should be able to provide a word that makes sense.

In the sentence, for example, The man ___ four sandwiches because he was very ____, the first blank requires a verb to connect the subject and object and the second blank requires an adjective since it is preceded by the modifier very. Furthermore, the verb must be a past tense form to agree with was in the subordinate clause, and since the object is a kind of food the most appropriate verb is probably ate, although consumed, ordered, devoured, and so on, would also be possible answers. The meaning of

the sentence calls for an adjective in the second blank such as hungry.

An entire cloze passage is normally long enough to include a large number of blanks of varying degrees of difficulty so that a wide range of proficiencies can be measured. The tests are scored either by giving credit only if the exact word that was deleted is given by the reader (strict scoring), or by allowing any semantically and syntactically acceptable word to be inserted (lenient scoring). As Oller (1979) notes, the choice of scoring method is of little importance because the two methods have been found to produce highly correlated measures. For teachers who are themselves nonnative speakers of English, it would probably be more expedient to use the exact-word method since it is more objective and does not require any guesswork or use of reference books on the part of the evaluator. In interpreting the scores, however, it should be remembered that strict scoring yields substantially lower scores than the lenient method. If a cloze test is being used as a placement instrument, therefore, score requirements should be scaled down accordingly.

As an alternative to this fairly open-ended procedure, multiple-choice cloze passages have been found to be much easier to evaluate, producing results that correlate highly with other types of testing instruments (Jonz, 1976). Using the same example as before, a multiple-choice format would appear as follows:

The man __(1)__ four sandwiches	1. a. with b. could c. ate d. buying
because he was very __(2)__.	2. a. yesterday b. hungry c. much d. taste

Of course, a complete passage would be much longer, containing a large enough number of blanks to allow

for a fairly wide range of scores. A multiple-choice cloze is more difficult to construct than an open-ended test, since the distractors, or incorrect response items, must be chosen carefully. They must be syntactically or semantically incorrect but yet not so ridiculous that they would never be selected by a test taker.

The main drawback with multiple-choice tests of this kind is that they do not provide a clear indication of the learner's ability to use context to predict the missing words. Instead, the test taker merely has to determine which of the alternative response choices results in a meaningful and grammatically correct sentence. The procedure does show how well a student understands the syntactic and semantic constraints of the language, however, and can be used as a reliable instrument for placement, especially when rapid evaluation and ease of scoring are important.

ELI-Pitt Reading Assessment Test[1]

Students who may not perform well enough on a proficiency test to produce a reliable score exhibit a considerable range of skills in both perceptual and cognitive reading abilities. Indeed, they may span a broad range of abilities in other language skills as well. Many students are orally very fluent, but cannot read or write at all. On the other hand, there are students who understand the written word very well, but who cannot speak an intelligible word. It is extremely important to begin at the appropriate place with these students, to build on what they know and not to frustrate them by trying to teach what they already know, or allow them to flounder in material that is beyond their reach.

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[1] Most of the information in this section originally appeared in an article in the TESOL Newsletter, June 1982.

Goodman (1970) notes the difference between "recoding," or transferring language from one medium to another, and "decoding," or extracting the meaning of the language. For example, reading aloud is recoding from the visual to the auditory medium, and can be done without decoding. People can do it in many foreign languages without a shred of comprehension; it is also quite common in a person's native language when confronted with material outside his or her field, such as when trying to read a contract or any document in "governmentese." Here is an example from the manual describing the word processing program with which the manuscript for this monograph was composed; you may be able to understand all the individual words, but anyone who has not had a good bit of experience with such documentation is defied to explain it to a novice:

> The partial loading procedure used by Catalyst has an interesting consequence. Space must be reserved for the largest interpreter. When a smaller interpreter is loaded, it may not be able to effectively make use of some of the space reserved for the larger interpreter. Most interpreters can use at least a portion of the space for file buffers. Catalyst will also use this space for the drivers it loads before using any other space. (Quark, 1983, pp. 1-3)

It is important for the reading teacher to be aware of the student's code-cracking perceptual skills as well as comprehension skills. Four levels of ability are identifiable in the process of learning the reading code:

1. The students know nothing about the Roman alphabet or the names or the sounds of the letters. Such students are always native speakers of languages that use different writing systems.

2. The students, when asked to spell aloud, say the letter names in their native language, or some other language that uses the Roman alphabet

that they may have studied, but they don't know the code (sound-symbol relationships) for English.

3. The students have some knowledge of the sound-symbol relationships, especially the regular consonant ones, but may have considerable trouble with the vowel relationships, which are rich and bothersome in English. (For example, ow has two possible pronunciations, as in slow and cow, with no clue as to which is which.)

4. The student knows most of the sound-symbol relationships and recodes with ease, but with the "accent" common to native speakers of his or her language.

Three levels of comprehension are discernible for very beginning readers:

1. When the students have no knowledge of the code, it stands to reason that they will not comprehend anything they read. However, some students who can recode with some facility cannot comprehend the meaning of the written word. These students come from all language backgrounds, even those with Roman alphabets.

2. Students at the second level of comprehension can understand and answer questions that come directly from the text and have the same syntactic structure. These students usually have a limited vocabulary and knowledge of structure.

3. Students at the third level of comprehension can not only answer direct questions about the text, but can also draw inferences from the material in a simple text. Despite a limited vocabulary, they possess the basic reading skills required by most currently available "beginning" ESL texts.

A short, simple test (about 5 minutes' administration time) can be used to sort out the different levels of abilities among beginning readers (Menasche, 1982). The procedures for giving the

test are part of the assessment, since they provide additional information. The test may be administered individually during regular proficiency testing or during the first reading class by the teacher. The latter procedure is preferable, since the reading teacher can gain a sense of the students' ability from the outset.

Materials

The teacher has an answer sheet for each student such as the following:

ELI Reading Test

Student _____

Comments

Paragraph I. Decoding to Sound

(unintelligible) 1 2 3 4 5 (very good)

Comments

Paragraph II. Comprehension

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

Comments

The actual test is on another sheet, as follows:

Paragraph 1. Read the following passage aloud.

Peter wanted to buy a book for his physics course, so he called the Lazy Fox Book Center to find out if they had it in stock. The person who answered the phone very quickly gave him the necessary information. Peter's friend offered to go to the store to get it for him, because he was going there anyway to buy a book for his English course.

Paragraph 2. Read the following silently and then answer the questions.

It was a hot day and Jeanie was feeling thirsty. On the way home she stopped at the cafeteria to have something to drink. To her surprise, she was told that there was only coffee available, so she decided to go home immediately, because she wanted a cold drink.

Questions. Read along as the examiner reads these questions. Then answer orally.

1. Why was Jeanie thirsty?
2. Why did she stop at the cafeteria?
3. Did she drink coffee at the cafeteria?
4. How long did Jeanie stay in the cafeteria?
5. Did the cafeteria have many kinds of drinks for its customers?
6. What did Jeanie want to drink?

PROCEDURES

The students are first assured that the test is simply to help the evaluators know how well they read, that it will not affect grades in any way, and that they should do the best they can. (Since the test is given during the first week, it is one of several and does not usually cause much anxiety.)

Then the first student is called to the teacher and asked to spell his or her name as the teacher writes it on the answer sheet. The student is encouraged to look on as the teacher writes, in order to correct any mistakes. In this way the teacher learns whether the student knows the names of the letters in English and is naming them correctly. Many students at this stage try to take the paper and pencil from the teacher and fill in the name themselves. If the teacher does not insist they try to spell aloud, the initial sound-symbol information will be lost. If the student cannot do this step at all even with translation of directions into the native language, it is safe to conclude that the student is at the basic beginning level and the test need go no further.

To test for the second level, the students read Paragraph 1 aloud and are rated on intelligibility. A judgment is made about the students' knowledge of the sound-symbol relationships with this part of the test. Students who read with an accent that is normal for people from their language background, but perfectly comprehensible to nonteachers of ESL, get a 5. If the teacher cannot understand them, they get a 1. (It is important to make the judgment in terms of nonprofessional listeners since comprehension would be harder for them. Thus the standard is stricter than if teachers were judging on the basis of their own comprehension of the students.)

In addition to the sound-symbol information, the teacher can attend to students' phrasing and intonation to determine whether they have any idea of the structural elements in the passage. Students who pause appropriately at the end of sentences or phrases probably understand some of what they are reading. On the other hand, those who read in a monotone probably do not have much idea of the grammar.

Comprehension questions are not asked about this passage, since it is perfectly possible to read aloud without understanding the content. (Consider that you may read a beloved children's story aloud for the tenth time while planning the next week's class in your mind. You would probably not be able

to answer a comprehension question on the spur of the moment.)

To test for the third level of comprehension, students read the second paragraph silently. Sometimes the teacher has to pantomime with a hand over the mouth while moving the eyes over the page to get the students to understand how they are to read it. While they are reading, the teacher should note how long they take, whether they subvocalize, and how often they reread parts of the passage. As a rule, the longer it takes to read the passage, the poorer will be the comprehension.

There is some controversy over the role the phonetic representation plays in reading comprehension. While reading teachers generally hold that subvocalizing slows down the reading, some contend that it serves a useful function in the early stages of learning to read by allowing the student to make the connection between spoken and written language. The teacher can also observe whether the students need to keep their place by marking it with a finger.[2]

The teacher then reads the questions as the student reads along. The student should understand the question if possible, since it is not a very good measure of reading comprehension if the student misses because he or she did not understand the question. Poor readers will not get any of the answers right, while beginners will probably answer the first two with verbatim answers from the passage. Notice that the last four questions require some inference and synthesis of the material in the passage. Good readers at this level answer all the questions quickly and with one- or two-word answers. The latter group of students is placed with confidence in regular beginning classes; the former require more attention than is available in most basic courses and texts. Techniques and exercises

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[2]While good readers use their fingers to keep up their pace, poor readers hold their place in this fashion.

to deal with these students' problems are discussed in Chapter 4.

ORAL READING

Reading aloud is a principal technique of assessment for some psychologists who investigate reading strategies. A method devised by Goodman and his colleagues (Allen & Watson, 1976; Buck, 1973; Goodman, 1970, 1973; Goodman & Burke, 1973), which has been used primarily to assess reading differences among native-speaking learners, is based on an analysis of the kinds of errors that readers make in reading aloud and of the readers' attempts to correct their errors. Since proponents of miscue analysis, as the method is known, view reading as a process of sampling and predicting from the printed page, they contend that mistakes made in oral reading are indicators of the strategies an individual uses when reading for meaning. For each miscue made by a subject, the investigators attempt to identify the factors that may have contributed to its occurrence and to determine to what extent the incorrectly produced item conforms to the graphic, syntactic, and semantic constraints of the text. Since this approach is based on the assumption that skilled reading is largely a top-down process, using as little graphic input as possible and supplying semantic concepts and a sense of syntactic structure to predict meaning (Goodman, 1973), it is assumed that errors will occur as a natural part of the reading process. If an error in the oral reading results in an utterance being perceived as syntactically or semantically unacceptable, the reader may attempt to correct it. An analysis of a reader's strategies, using a specially designed taxonomy of errors, takes into account the number and kind of errors made, the number and kind of errors that are subsequently corrected, and the success of the attempts at correction. Then these data are related to overall reading comprehension as measured through the reader's retelling of the content of the text.

When assessing non-English speakers' reading ability through reading aloud, the ability to recode without comprehension should be borne in mind. Although miscue analysis is supposedly applicable to foreign-language learning situations as well as to the first-language reading for which it was originally designed, a number of problems are apparent in this regard. While oral reading may represent a transformation of printed language to a familiar oral form for children learning to read their native language, speaking skills are often as underdeveloped as reading skills for students of a foreign language. Not surprisingly, then, attempts to evaluate reading ability in a foreign language using the miscue-analysis approach (e.g., Cziko, 1980, looking at English-speaking students of French; and Folman, 1977, dealing with Israeli students of English) have not found any significant differences in subjects' ability to use sntactic and semantic constraints, regardless of their level of proficiency in the language, due to their preoccupation with the graphic input.

There is one instance, however, when reading aloud can reveal a great deal about the students' reading ability. Using a technique called "read and look up" (West, 1960), the student looks at a sentence or part of a passage, says it silently, looks up from the page and says the sentence aloud. Unless the student understands the grammatical structure and the message of the sentence, it is impossible to remember the string long enough to repeat it back. We frequently use the technique at beginning and intermediate levels to check comprehension and strengthen short-term memory.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CLASSROOM

Once the teacher has determined students' reading abilities to be minimal, he or she must select classroom procedures for teaching the basic reading skills--how to crack the code of English,

learn the sound-symbol correspondences, and then learn the traditional skills of decoding grammar, developing word-study skills, guessing meaning from context, and using a dictionary. For students who start at zero proficiency in reading English, the early skills must be learned quickly so that these students can keep up with students of higher proficiency and so that they do not become discouraged. Some steps toward achieving these goals are outlined here, along with examples of exercises that can be used and adapted for classroom use.

CRACKING THE CODE

It is very beneficial for readers, especially at beginning levels of study, to be able to relate the written and spoken forms of the language. This is particularly true for native speakers, who in essence are faced with the challenge of associating what is written on the page with their already well-established knowledge of the spoken language; it also applies to foreign-language learners, whose oral skills are more highly developed than their reading ability, or indeed to any student who wishes to gain proficiency in the use of both spoken and written language. Since there is a close relationship between the way words are pronounced and the way they are spelled when dealing with an alphabetically represented language such as English, it would be highly inefficient to neglect the correspondences that exist between sounds and graphic symbols. However, in light of the abundance of irregularities in the orthographic system of English, it is especially essential that concentrated training and practice in both regular sound-symbol correspondences and exceptions be provided as an integral component of the curriculum. This procedure will enable students to guess with some accuracy the pronunciation of new words they encounter as well as teaching them to guess the spelling of new words they hear.

RECOGNITION OF CAPITAL LETTERS

Learning Sound-Symbol Correspondences Through the Use of Iconic Devices

In order to begin to read in English, a student's understanding of the relationship of sound to symbol must be automatic. It seems easier if there is some device that can be used in case the student forgets. The most common device is a picture or word associated with a specific sound, as with B is for baby accompanied by a picture of a baby, very similar to beginning reading books for native-speaking children. Care must be taken to choose pictures that are simple, clear, consistent with the culture of the students, and not insulting to adults. Line drawings are often the best if the teacher can create them, or has a source. (Some children's books have good clear drawings, as do some illustrated beginner's dictionaries.)

The picture must portray the vocabulary item unambiguously. For example, rather than illustrating L is for letter with an addressed, stamped envelope, using a drawing of a piece of paper with handwriting on it, along with an envelope, is much more effective. Also, words that play an important role culturally are sometimes difficult to portray. Rice is an example. Sensitivity to cultural matters is especially difficult when presenting materials for a heterogeneous group. Avoid the obvious, such as using dogs and pigs when the materials will be used by Moslem students; and have all materials checked for cultural content with native speakers of the languages, if possible. One further caution regarding the use of pictures: Cartoons should be avoided since some cultures regard them as childish and therefore insulting in materials for adults.

The following list of words has been tested and refined over the past several years. They seem to be both inoffensive and clearly ilustratable (Bruder & Williams, 1982). Note that illustrations for the name and base sounds of the vowels are given, and for the consonants with more than one sound, as

well as some common digraphs. Other vowel sounds are not introduced in the initial presentation to avoid confusion. The student who has mastered the list shown in Figure 1 (page 40) knows most sound-symbol relationships for English.

Note that the list contains all the letters and significant sounds (phonemes) of English except / ɔ/ as in ball, / ɑʊ/ as in house, / ɔɪ/ as in boy, /u/ as in moon, / ʊ/ as in book, / ɚ/ as in bird. The key words have proved to be sufficient for the students to learn the names of the letters and the sounds in a fairly straightforward manner. The remaining six are all spelled with the same letters as are found in the key word list, and may be learned later.

The following steps may be used to teach students to "crack the code." First it is useful to have an explanation in the native language where possible. If not, the letter A and the two key words apple and ape may be used, since most students can hear the difference in those vowel sounds, and thus understand the concepts more readily. It is important to remember that the students will have difficulty hearing the differences in some of the vowel pairs, as well as among the unfamiliar consonants. If they can hear the difference in one pair they tend to believe that there is a difference in the others, which is good because they will eventually be able to discern the difference even if they cannot do so at first.

Learning the Names of the Letters in Sequence

The students will have to spell aloud on a number of occasions, giving their names and other types of information; and they will eventually have to learn to use a dictionary. Learning the letter names also gives some clues to their sounds. Each vowel name is also one of the sounds the vowel represents, for example. The sound of each of the following letters is at the beginning of its name: B, C, D, G, J, K, P, Q, T, V, Z. The sound of the following letters is at the end of the name: F, L,

Letter	Sound	Word
A	/ e /	ape
A	/ æ /	apple
B	/ b /	baby
C	/ k /	cat
C	/ s /	city
D	/ d /	door
E	/ i /	sheep
E	/ ɛ /	egg
F	/ f /	fish
G	/ g /	goat
G	/ ǰ /	giraffe
H	/ h /	hat
I	/ ai /	rice
I	/ ɪ /	six
J	/ ǰ /	jet
K	/ k /	king
L	/ l /	letter
M	/ m /	man
N	/ n /	nose
O	/ o /	coke
O	/ a /	stop
P	/ p /	pencil
Q	/ kw /	queen
R	/ r /	ring
S	/ s /	sun
T	/ t /	telephone
U	/ yu /	cube
U	/ ə /	bus
V	/ v /	vase
W	/ w /	woman
X	/ ks /	exit
Y	/ y /	year
Z	/ ź /	zero
CH	/ č /	chair
TH	/ θ /	thumb
TH	/ ð /	mother
SH	/ ś /	shoe

Figure 1. Key word list.

M, N, R, S, X. Only three letters do not contain their sounds in their names: H, W, and Y (Bruder & Williams, 1982).

Using flashcards, the teacher may say the name of each letter and have the students repeat. The teacher should say the letters in groups for repetition, first two, then three, and build up to four or five as the students' memories increase. The teacher may hold up a card and ask the students to call out the letter that follows in the alphabet. The teacher may hold up two cards and have the students call out the letter or letters that fall in the middle. The class may have a race around the room, starting with one student and continuing until all students have given a letter in order. The teacher can time the exercise and note how the time decreases from day to day.

Teachers working with students of this level of proficiency will come up with many tricks to keep the students learning. However, such memory work is inherently boring, and students progress much more rapidly if production of the letters is introduced early, around the second hour of instruction.

Production of the Capital Letters

Literate adults seem to rely on the written word for remembering things (visual memory). As a result, ESL students are frustrated when they cannot write things down. Learning to produce the letters right away relieves some of this frustration, and allows for a wider variety of exercise types. Thus some of the boredom that may accompany the cracking of the code is alleviated. In addition, producing the letters in writing reinforces the auditory and visual presentation. The students produce only the capital letters because those are the main printed forms of the letters that will be needed--for filling out forms, and so on. Later on they will produce handwritten (cursive) capital and small letters, because that style of writing is faster than printing.

There are many exercise books and worksheets meant for children learning to write that are appropriate here (as long as they are not accompanied by childish illustrations, etc.). The students need enough practice to be able to produce the letters rather automatically, and they should say the name of the letter as they trace or produce it.

In order not to overload the students' visual memories, the alphabet should be divided into groups of four or five letters, and the production can be reinforced by other activities such as dictation ("Copy the letters in the order the teacher says them"); and sound to symbol ("Write the first letter of the word your teacher says").

Recognition of the Small Letters

The use of the terms capital/small or upper case/lower case seems to depend on the writing method a student learned as a child. The materials should be consistent in using one or the other; although since most of the students will recognize the term small, using that set will require learning only one new term.

The students are required to notice the difference between capital and small letters, to be able to associate the small and capital of the same letter, and to distinguish among similar small letters. The students should see the whole alphabet in capital and small letters (A a, B b, C c, D d, etc.). The teacher should help the students see similarities as well as the differences in the shapes of the letters. For example, show them how the bulge of the B goes the same way from the vertical line for both the capital and the small letter, but the bulge of the D is in opposite directions for the capital and small versions.

The following exercises can be used to teach capital and small letters.

1. To distinguish between capital and small letters, students may be given a list such as the following and asked to circle the small letters:

1. D (e) (d) F (q)

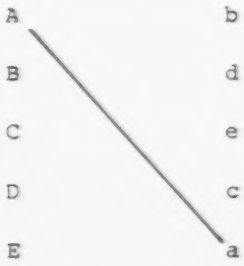
2. r W v l L

3. N m n u U etc.

(Bruder & Williams, 1982, p. 15)

Then students may be given a text of five or six lines, and asked to circle the capital letters. Depending on the proficiency of the students, they might be led to the generalization that sentences begin with capital letters in English. They can look "sentence" up in their bilingual glossaries.

2. To learn to associate capital and small versions of the same letter, students may be asked to connect the capital and small letters in a display such as the following:



(Bruder & Williams, 1982, p. 17)

Next, ask them to circle the small letters that are the same as the capital:

1. P q (p) g (p) q j

2. T t f r f t r

3. U v u w n u r etc.

(Bruder & Williams, 1982, p. 16)

In the following exercise, have the students make a check mark (✓) if the letters are the same:

1. A e ___
2. A a ✓
3. B b ✓
4. D b ___ etc.

(Bruder & Williams, 1982, p. 15)

Then have them write the capital letter and say it at the same time, with a list such as the following:

1. a A
2. e ___
3. i ___
4. d ___
5. b ___

Finally, ask the students to identify the small letter in the following display:

1. N: m (n) r p c v
2. R: z s a r v n
3. B: b p s e d f
4. Y: a l v f y j etc.

(Henderson, 1983, p. 16)

3. To help students distinguish among similar small letters, first have them circle the small letters in each line that are the same as the ones on the left:

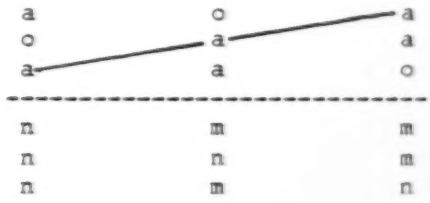
1. b d p (b) d (b) p

2. d b p d q d b

3. f t f r f l t etc.

(Bruder & Williams, 1982, p. 15)

Then have them connect the letters that are the same and fall in a row in displays such as the following:



All the exercises can be adapted to the various aspects of cracking the code, handwriting capitals and small letters, distinguishing words, and so forth. Focus on problem areas for each group of students in constructing the exercises; students may resent having to do many exercises that are extremely easy.

Production of Small, Handwritten Letters

Practitioners disagree on what the next step should be after students learn to recognize printed capital and small letters and to produce the capital letters. One option is to go on to beginning reading exercises, have students complete their mastery of sound-symbol correspondences, and then progress to more complex reading. Some students do not make this transition easily; they need more time to digest the basics. For these students, all the material may be recycled through the task of producing the small, handwritten letters. It is up to the teacher of the individual student or class to decide the most appropriate sequence. Incidentally,

the term handwritten is easier to grasp than the term cursive.

First, the students learn to produce the letters in isolation, tracing and then producing them freehand. Key words (if they have been presented) may accompany each letter to remind the students of the sound, but the students are not asked to produce the key words in writing until the letters have been presented individually. Once they have practiced the letters in isolation they are instructed to connect them in sequences found in English words.

Once the students have mastered the vowels, the consonants may be presented in alphabetical order, using simple words that the students can pronounce and learn, in some cases, by looking up the meanings in their glossaries. Dictation of letter sequences is a useful exercise at this stage. It should be emphasized that the students are to say the names of the letters and the words as they are produced. The following exercises are recommended.

T t Identify and print the letter:

t f l t i r t d f l x (etc.)

k l x t f z t v k f d (etc.)

(Henderson, 1983, p. 2)

Identify the letter combinations:

at	ot	to	at	al	af	ta	at	ot
ga	go	qa	ad	bo	ga	go	ag	ga
st	sl	st	ts	at	et	sf	zt	st

(etc.)

(Henderson, 1983, p. 3)

Print the letter combinations:

Bob

ban

cob

(etc.)

(Henderson, 1983, p. 3)

Leaving Spaces Between Words

After the practice with the small letters, before going to the handwritten capitals, introduce the idea of putting words together into phrases with spaces between the words. This is a crucial concept for students with non-Roman-alphabet backgrounds. The students may be asked to copy printed phrases by hand, and dictations are again useful here. Students may also be given boxes in which to copy the words in order to reinforce the idea, as follows:

The woman is going to work.

The	woman	is	going	to	work.

She has a red and blue blouse.

(Hershelman, 1979, p. 12)

Production of Handwritten Capital Letters

The students need to know when capital letters are used, which ones connect with the following letters (as a rule), and how to differentiate between capital and small handwritten letters. First give simple rules for capitalization and then introduce the days of the week, months of the year, and so on, as appropriate in the exercises.

Bruder and Williams (1982) have divided the capitals into three groups: easy, those whose handwritten small letters are virtually the same as the capitals (A/a, C/c, M/m, N/n, O/o, S/s, U/u, V/v, X/x, Y/y, Z/z); hard, whose capital and small letters are similar in some respects (J/j, K/k, L/l, P/p, W/w) or the handwritten letters are similar to the printed ones (B/B, D/D, E/E, R/R); and tough, whose capital and small letters do not resemble each other at all (F/F/f, G/G/g, H/H/h, I/I/i, Q/Q/q, T/T/t). Henderson (1983) presents the letters grouped by similarity of form (A, O, Q, D, for example). The letters should be organized to allow the students to concentrate on those that are the most difficult for them. At this stage the students should be copying from printed models and writing simple sentences from dictation using the words and sounds they have already learned; spacing and end punctuation should be emphasized.

Learning Alphabetization

Learning to alphabetize words is a good way to reinforce the skills learned thus far and a good introduction to using the dictionary in English. Alphabetization is straightforward in English, and the rules are easy to learn; all the students need is practice in the increasing complexities as the words to be alphabetized are increasingly similar at the beginnings. Students whose languages are not alphabetic will need to pay special attention to the rules; students whose languages are alphabetic, but not the Roman alphabet, will need to understand how

the organization of the dictionary in English is different from their own.

An example exercise by Henderson (1983) can be adapted to the vocabulary that the students have learned. The complexity increases as the activity progresses.

Have the students print the words in alphabetical order:

1.	give/bottle/picture	bottle	give	picture
2.	always/listen/another	_____	_____	_____
	...			
9.	speak/station/serve	_____	_____	_____
	...			
11.	there/table/their	_____	_____	_____
	...			
26.	weather/welcome/well	_____	_____	_____
	(etc.)			(p. 19)

In conclusion, for students to learn to crack the code of English, teachers must examine the systems of the students' native languages. They must consider how to present the material, as well as the students' relative proficiency in English. For example, Spanish speakers will need to learn the basic sound-symbol correspondences with special attention to the vowels, but they need not spend much time with handwriting or alphabetization. Students who use similar alphabets, such as the Slavic languages, need to concentrate on the sound-symbol correspondences of similar letters that have very different sounds; then they need to learn new letters and their correspondences. If the students use an alphabet, but not the Roman one, they will probably need to go through the complete series of steps outlined earlier if they are at the beginning reading level as defined here. Academically oriented students from languages that do not use the Roman alphabet are already knowledgeable about English; it is up to the teacher to decide where on the continuum a student's abilities lie.

EYE MOVEMENT TRAINING

A major problem of many students is lack of speed in moving their eyes over the page. Speed-reading techniques should not be taught at this level of proficiency; only fluent readers can benefit from such training. Students can, however, be trained to move their eyes faster and to pick out certain features. The exercises should be timed, at first liberally, then faster and faster to create a sense of competition (friendly) and a gamelike atmosphere.

A reader develops an effective pattern of saccades, or eye movements, by learning to pick up as much graphic information as possible from each fixation, thereby reducing the number of fixations needed to read a line of print. This entails being able to perceive words and phrases as visual units rather than having to pay attention to individual letters. At beginning levels, rapid discrimination exercises with words of increasing length, such as the following, will help students become accustomed from the outset to focusing on words and common letter sequences.

Circle the words that are the same as the given word.

me	em	ma	ne	we	am	(me)	ew	om	(me)	mo	(me)	ne	
id	bi	id	di	ld	id	ib	pi	ig	jd	di	id	ib	
dim	bim	dim	din	mid	dim	dem	din	aim	bid	dim	dim		
dime	dine	bime	dime	lime	bine	time	dime	tine	dime	diem			
mind	mine	nind	dime	line	bine	time	dime	time	dime	diem			
send	send	send	sand	sent	cend	sind	send	semd	send	senf			

bends	bends benas	dends denbs	bendz	bandz	bends	bends
timed	tined fined	timed timed	dimed	timea	timed	timed

(Henderson, 1983, p. 7)

A similar type of exercise requires that students find words as they are read at increasingly rapid rates. In order to complete the activity successfully, the reader must be able to recognize at a glance whether a given word is the one he or she is looking for. The following example is used in Barnard's (1971) advanced vocabulary workbooks:

Number the following words in the order in which you hear them (the teacher reads them out in any order):

paper study 1 desk

class room 3 book pencil

2 chair good table

The choice of words for any such activity depends on the proficiency level of the students. It is preferable to use words that the students know so that they can become accustomed to thinking of the words as meaningful units. In the Barnard workbooks, the words are taken from a reading passage that has been presented earlier in the lesson.

Another useful activity involves determining as quickly as possible whether the members of a pair are the same or different:

Circle S if the following phrases are the same; circle D if they are different:

take a look	take a book	S	D
go to town	go to town	S	D

To make these activities more meaningful, students can be asked to find words that are synonymous

with given words. This will take longer, of course, since it will not be possible to rely on a visual match.

Underline the word that has the same meaning as the given word:

1.	shut	watch	close	sleep	need
2.	speak	point	talk	hope	see
3.	purchase	step	buy	listen	dream

(Norris, 1972, p. 195)

VOCABULARY LEARNING

In a foreign language class, the teacher usually has the luxury of being able to limit the amount of vocabulary introduced to the students and the possibility of using the students' native language for the presentation. On the other hand, the foreign language student may not see the need of learning new words when the native language ones seem to suit perfectly. As a result, the teacher may have a motivation problem. In the ESL classroom, the teacher is confronted with students whose vocabulary needs are enormous and immediate, both for academic study and for normal living arrangements; but the teacher lacks the ease of native language use in explaining the words and the meanings.

There are probably no new gimmicks for teaching vocabulary at the beginning level; many teachers have been using the same techniques for years. However, some of the general principles might usefully be discussed here. Since appropriate readers or materials may be difficult to find for a target group, the best approach is to cull reading texts for exercise types that can be adapted to an individual class.

At the basic level, the vocabulary the students need is mostly concrete, and thus picturable. Pictures and illustrations, if they are clear, are

very helpful, but they should leave no room for doubt. (One language class spent several hours learning color words illustrated by sticks of different lengths. At the end of the lesson, one man expressed amazement at how the students had succeeded in learning the words-- he thought the words referred to the lengths of the sticks.)

Vocabulary at this level is best learned in the context of a commonplace situation--the supermarket, an apartment, a kitchen--but care should be taken not to overload the students with extraneous vocabulary; for example, whisk is probably a useless item for beginning students. One way to handle this situation is to collect a series of pictures, present the basic series in the first week or two and then recycle them, adding vocabulary that has come up in readings or elsewhere and letting students ask for specific words to fit the contexts they have come to need since the last presentation.

The vocabulary of classroom management should be carefully thought out, since it constitutes a large portion of early vocabulary input. The teacher can even write down the routine commands such as Open your books to page ____ and Hand in the homework so that the students can look up the words in bilingual glossaries. The teacher should be very careful to monitor the syntax and lexical complexity of his or her speech, so that the students hear the same phrases repeatedly; this practice will help with listening comprehension and make life much easier for students while they gain confidence through knowing what to expect and being able to do the right thing. For example, the teacher might want to avoid the idiomatic hand in and substitute give me for the first few weeks.

Some students want word lists, but most teachers are reluctant to give out lists that present words in alphabetical order out of context and often without designation of part of speech. They fear, rightly, that students will not be able to use the words correctly or even be able to tell which meaning of the word to refer to when they see the word in a text. For the students who insist, however, basic word lists make them feel better; for some

students, memorizing lists is a common way of learning. As long as learning the list does not interfere with the accomplishment of the other learning tasks, it seems harmless enough.

A very good technique for explaining vocabulary, especially in a heterogeneous classroom, is to ask if any of the other students knows the meaning of a given word. Students with their limited vocabulary and grammar are often better able than the teacher to explain things simply and in terms other students will comprehend. One class was doing a reading in which someone had fainted, and the word unconscious came up. The teacher, obviously unable to think of a good clear explanation, called on one of the students, who promptly said, "It's when your eyes are closed and you're not asleep and not dead."

It is very common at beginning levels to teach vocabulary items in pairs of opposites: good/bad, tall/short, fat/thin, and so on. This is not recommended, since the learner may remember the words, but not which attribute is associated with which word, and get them mixed up. Only after the words have been learned separately should they be brought together as an aid to the memory.

Following are four general types of exercises for beginning-level vocabulary.

Copying

Many vocabulary exercises at the beginning level involve copying of some kind. While this may not seem like a very interesting task, it is, in fact, very useful for reinforcing beginning reading skills. Besides, the students' vocabulary is so limited that getting them to produce vocabulary from memory is virtually impossible.

In one exercise, the student practices putting the same word into several sentence contexts:

perfect A thing is perfect when it is complete and has no fault; when it is the best of its own kind.

Examples: It is very difficult to draw a p_____t circle. Your work is good, but no one can call it _____. They found a _____ place for their holiday.

(Barnard, 1971, Vol. 1, p. 3)

In the next exercise, after reading a passage, the student writes the correct words in the blank:

Avenue good bad Street

This is 88th _____ between Second Avenue and Third _____. It isn't a very _____ block. It isn't a very _____ block.

(Bodman & Lanzano, 1975, p. 18)

Synonyms/Antonyms

In this exercise, the student is asked to select from the list the word that has the same meaning as the phrases given.

final baby guy

1. the last _____
2. a man or boy _____
3. a very small child _____

(Bodman & Lanzano, 1975, p. 37)

Guessing from Context

From the outset, exercises should encourage students to guess meanings from the information they have, and they need to be taught how to use that information. The teacher might construct simple sentences using the grammar and vocabulary familiar to the students to introduce new words. For example:

The man has an _____. He thinks it will rain.

In this instance, the students may be led to say that a noun is needed and that it will begin with a vowel. Further, the item is something that is used when it rains. If the students think they know what the word is in their native language, they can look in their glossaries and find the English word. This kind of exercise draws on their past experiences and teaches them the skills they will need to become better readers.

Comprehension Questions

Two types of comprehension questions can be used at the basic levels of reading ability. The most common are the ones typically found after reading passages and illustrated on page 3 in the Menasche (1982) test of reading comprehension. Even at the beginning levels, questions should require the students to make inferences. A second type, usually called "True or False," gives sentences that students can label correctly if they know the meanings of the words. A pair of sentences such as Stamps like to eat pizza and Politicians like to eat pizza requires only that the students know that politicians are human and stamps are not in order to complete the exercise correctly. Such sentences are easy to construct using known vocabulary and grammar as a review, or with new vocabulary for presentation purposes.

Basically the same types of vocabulary exercises that are available in most beginning reading texts may be adapted for beginning readers. Care must be taken that the syntax and the core vocabulary in the sentences to be read is not beyond the beginners.

GRAMMAR

Learning to read requires more than cracking the code and learning words. The students must recognize the relationships among the words--the grammar. At the very basic levels, teachers should have students learn to read the same structures they are learning to produce orally; this minimizes confusion, and the visual reinforcement speeds oral learning. The grammatical patterns should also be limited at first, so that the students can learn as much vocabulary as possible in the first few weeks. (It is ironic that in the late 1960s when audiolingual methodologies held sway, teachers limited the vocabulary and pushed the grammar, much to the dismay of students, who wanted "words, words, words." It turns out they were right; words without grammar can get you quite far, but grammar without words is useless in the real world.)

Academically oriented students usually know the metalanguage for talking about grammar: noun, verb, adjective, present tense, and so on. If they do, then the labels can conveniently be used to analyze the reading passages. Students should be asked to identify sentences in context that exhibit certain grammatical features. They can also be given sentence-matching exercises: The teacher writes a sentence on the board and the class is given a limited time to find a sentence with the same structure in the reading. Students can be asked to find similar structures in the local or student newspaper. It is important to stress that the students should work mainly on recognition of grammar patterns in reading (and copying exercises, if used); production of even simple sentences in writing is extremely difficult at the beginning levels.

An interesting exercise that was developed in work with native speakers of English learning to write can also be used with foreign students. The students construct an oral narrative, which is written on the blackboard by the teacher. Since the students have limited grammatical structures, they

will not make the story too complex; the teacher can remedy any major problems, and then the narrative may be used for reading material for the class. It may be amended on a regular basis and makes a good record of class achievement over the course of a term.

WORD STUDY

Just as a knowledge of the grammar makes reading easier, a knowledge of the way words are formed using prefixes and suffixes and so on helps students guess more intelligently when faced with unknown vocabulary. Many current beginning reading books contain exercises in word study, and once the students reach the level of proficiency of beginning reading, they can progress without special exercises. It is important to ensure that the exercise concentrates on recognition rather than production of the word forms. Very beginning students should be taught the inflections for plurals, past tense, progressives, and common prefixes that occur in the readings, such as un-. Word study beyond the very elementary is better left until the students' proficiency permits easier comprehension.

MEANING FROM CONTEXT

Due to the large amount of redundancy that is almost always present in extended discourse, it is usually possible to understand a reading passage even though some of the words are unfamiliar. Skilled readers use cues of various kinds to anticipate what is likely to be encountered on the page and are thus able to read quickly, using as little graphic input as possible to confirm their expectations. When faced with an unfamiliar word, readers use syntactic cues to determine the part of speech and grammatical function of the word, and can

usually guess at its meaning on the basis of semantic information presented in the rest of the sentence or in other parts of the passage. Proficient readers very seldom take the time to look up new words in the dictionary, since the meaning is usually evident from the context in which they are found.

Beginning readers, on the other hand, may struggle so much with individual words or even more basic units of language that they are not able to process the overall meaning of a sentence; by the time they reach the end of the sentence, they may have forgotten information from the beginning and thus have difficulty interpreting the sentence as a whole. In a consideration of ESL reading problems, Norris (1972) makes note of this difficulty, observing that students who can focus on only one word at a time "will usually be unable to put the words together and understand the sense of the sentence" (p. 190). It is equally unlikely that such learners will be able to retain the meaning of one sentence long enough to integrate it with the meaning of subsequent material in order to follow the development of the message intended to be conveyed by the text as a whole. It is important, therefore, that from the beginning stages of reading, learners be trained to think about the global meaning of what they are reading and not get unnecessarily bogged down in word-by-word detail.

As Grellet (1981) proposes, it is advisable to have students look first for the overall gist of a text and then to give attention to details, both because in this way students will gain confidence in their ability to understand what they are reading and because such an approach will help learners develop an ability to infer meanings and anticipate what they are likely to encounter in the text.

One way of convincing students that they really do not have to understand every word in order to extract meaning from a passage is to eliminate some of the words. While this is similar to the cloze test procedure, the objective is quite different; the reader is not asked to supply the missing words but to try to understand the text in spite of the

omissions. Once they see that this is possible, students overcome much of their preoccupation with individual words.

There are various ways in which context can provide clues to the meaning of a word. It is useful to give learners practice in using context through exercises of the following sorts.

Finding Synonyms, Definitions, or Equivalent Expressions

Writers often avoid repeating particular words by expressing the same meaning in another way. Students must become aware of the possibility of using such equivalents to grasp the meaning of a given word, as is demonstrated in the following example:

> The students lack time for sports. They don't have time for anything but homework.
>
> lack means _____. (not have)

At beginning levels, it may help to provide several options from which the students may choose the one that is closest to the target word:

> I want to buy a new car, but I can't afford it now. I don't even have enough money to buy a motorcycle.
>
> to afford means
>
> a. to drive a car
> b. to have enough money to buy something
> c. to want something
> d. to save money

Finding Antonyms or Contrasts

Other words or expressions in a text often mean

the opposite of the word in question, as shown in the following example:

> It is interesting to travel in your country, but it is more exciting to travel abroad.
>
> Abroad means
>
> a. travel
> b. in your country
> c. exciting
> d. outside your country

Finding an Example or Explanation

In many cases a text will explain a term or provide examples that help make the meaning of a term clear, as in the following sentence:

> The store sells many kinds of small appliances such as toasters, coffee makers, and irons.

To better enable students to use this strategy, it is valuable to teach expressions such as such as, including, for example, for instance, and so on.

Finding Cause-and-Effect Relationships

The meaning of a new word can sometimes be understood if the context indicates what caused it or what resulted from it:

> The child was scalded when he spilled the boiling water on himself.
>
> The speech was so boring that many people in the audience fell asleep.

USING A GLOSSARY/DICTIONARY

The term glossary refers here to the English/foreign language dictionaries from which students are inseparable. They are basically lists of synonyms or elaborations of phrases, but are not, in the traditional sense, dictionaries. A dictionary, on the other hand, is in one language, gives multiple meanings of the words, synonyms, antonyms, historical information, and possibly, examples in sentences.

In the past, advocating the use of bilingual glossaries by beginning readers was considered heresy. The argument went something like this: The students get dependent on the glossaries and do not learn to use dictionaries; and there are so many synonyms, the student might get the wrong one and then the teacher would be powerless to control errors. The counterargument is based on practicality as well as concern for the student. While glossaries must be given up for dictionaries at some specified point in the reading program--about the intermediate level where there are exercises and a carefully thought-out unit on the use of the dictionary. Beginning readers have scarcely learned the alphabet, and it seems ludicrous to force them to try to wade through a wordy definition in a language in which they hardly know any words. As to the matter of choosing the wrong word, the teacher can help the students learn how to use the glossary to good effect. At the beginning of the term all of the students should bring their glossaries each day so that they can look up the basic key words. There will not be many problems with misinterpretation or ambiguities in the core vocabulary; and if one student's definition of "king" includes "a constitutional monarch" while another's rules by divine right, it is a small mismatch that is not likely to cause reading problems at this level.

After a certain amount of vocabulary and grammar has been presented, the teacher can do a glossary exercise. A series of sentences may be presented with words missing, accompanied by a list

of those words plus two or three extras. The teacher and students read through the sentences, if necessary, making sure there are no unfamiliar words. Then the students look up the meanings in their glossaries--in class--and fill in the blanks. (It turns out to be a lesson in getting meaning from context as well as a glossary exercise.) The teacher circulates to make sure everyone is on the right track. Students who have difficulties may be referred back to the glossary and helped to see why they made the wrong choice. The teacher should have on hand a glossary in his or her best known foreign language so that he [or she] can check which meanings are likely to be included. To be sure, items that appear in an English/French glossary are not guaranteed to be the same as those in an Arabic/English version, but it is one measure that should not be overlooked.

CONCLUSION

The experience over the past few years of trying to teach nonreaders in English has been both trying and exciting. The frustration of failure with tried-and-true techniques gave way to elation upon finding something new that seemed to work. No doubt in the next few years, both teachers and psychologists, working together, will have a better description of the reading process, and the techniques may be further refined.

In order to fully comprehend what the students are faced with, any teacher who has not recently learned a foreign language should begin the study of one whose writing system is very different from English. Even a few weeks' study will give the teacher insights that will be especially valuable to the teaching of reading. It is a most challenging and humbling experience.

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